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The Expanding World of Science Fiction
Gallup Survey: Who Buys SF? • Bookstores That Sell by Mail
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Publishers Weekly

A CAHNERS/R.R. BOWKER PUBLICATION *THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS MAGAZINE OF BOOK PUBLISHING* NOVEMBER 4, 1988 $2.50

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Publishers Weekly

VOLUME 234 NUMBER 19
ISSN 0000-0019

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS MAGAZINE OF BOOK PUBLISHING

NOVEMBER 4, 1988

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SALES OFFICES: Cahners Publishing Company, 249 W. 17th St., New York, N.Y. 10011 (212-645-0067); Stephen M. Chazen (212-463-6810); Holly Malekian (212-463-6809) Lynn Myers (212-463-6811). **MIDWEST:** Edward Associates, Morton Grove, Ill. 60053 (312-470-1777); **SOUTH:** Robin Mays, 2975 Christophers Court N.E., Marietta, GA 30062 (404-977-9372). **WEST:** James K. Levitt and Associates, Inc., 11921 Vose St., North Hollywood, Calif. 91605 (818-764-5101). NON-U.S.A. representatives: Canada: Claude Choquette, Montreal-Contacts/The Rights Agency, Montreal and Toronto. France, French-speaking Belgium and French-speaking Switzerland: Eliane Benisti, Paris. France. Germany, Austria, Flemish-speaking Belgium and German-speaking Switzerland: Barbara Malmsheimer, Zurich, Switzerland. Italy: Dennis Linder, Agensia Letteraria Internazionale, Milan. Japan: Tom Mori, Tuttle-Mori Agency, Tokyo. Scandinavia and The Netherlands: Lennart Sane, Lennart Sane Agency, Karlshamn, Sweden. Spain, Portugal and Latin America, including Brazil: Carmen Balcells, Barcelona, Spain. United Kingdom and Ireland: Tracey Lehane, Cahners LTD. London. Publishers Weekly reserves the right to make its own independent judgment as to the acceptability of advertising copy and illustrations in advertisements. Advertiser and advertising agency assume liability for all content (including text, representation and illustrations) of advertisements printed and also assume responsibility for any claims arising therefrom against the publisher. Offers to sell products that appear in Publishers Weekly are subject to all laws and regulations and are void where so prohibited.

BY LEONARD WOOD

Who Buys Science Fiction?

TABLE 1:
RETAIL OUTLETS

	Total Books %	Science Fiction %
Bookstore	55	71
Department/ Discount store	9	11
Supermarket/ Grocery store	8	4
Book club	7	4
Mail order	7	0
Drug store	3	2
Newsstand	1	3

TABLE 2:
CONSUMER PROFILES—1987

	Total Book Buyers %	Science Fiction Buyers %
Sex		
Male	44	60
Female	56	40
Age		
18-24 years	16	23
25-34 years	27	42
35-49 years	31	28
50 and older	28	7
Education		
College	60	67
High school graduate	31	28
Nonhigh school graduate	8	5
Annual Household Income		
$30,000 or more	53	53
$20,000-$29,000	23	20
$10,000-$19,000	17	15
Under $10,000	7	12
Women's Employment Status		
Full time	48	42
Part time	15	16
Not employed	37	42
Region		
East	26	20
Midwest	24	29
South	26	24
West	24	27

From the novels of H. G. Wells to the tales of Isaac Asimov, science fiction works have captured our attention and imagination for nearly a century. They have been also been a staple of the book market—titles in this genre account for 4% of the books purchased each year, according to Gallup studies conducted since 1984.

Paperbacks are the dominant science fiction format (78%), even more so than among general books (60%). Science fiction books (71%) have a greater than average (55%) likelihood of being purchased in a bookstore, but a lower likelihood of being ordered through the mail, either book club or other mail-order source (Table 1).

Perhaps one reason for the genre's popularity is its price. Both paperback ($4.10 average) and hardcover ($13.70) science fiction books cost less in 1987 than other books.

Just as science fiction books are distinctive in their content, style and sales attributes, consumers of these books are also unique. Science fiction readers are predominantly men (60%), and 67% of these readers have a college education, compared to only 60% of book buyers as a whole.

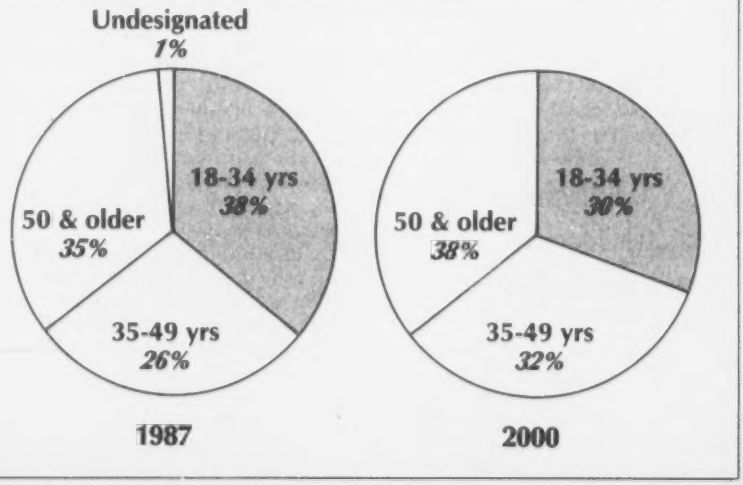
Regionally, the smallest proportion of 1987 science fiction buyers came from the East, and the concentration of Midwesterners was higher among science fiction consumers (29%) than average (24%).

But the most striking feature of science fiction buyers is their distribution by age. The bulk of the genre's fans (42%) are 25–34-year-olds, and two-thirds of them are under 35 (65%), compared to only four in 10 average book buyers (43%) (Table 2).

If we assume that the genre's appeal is age-driven, then prospects for future sales are somewhat dim. The group of 18–34-year-olds now composes 38% of adults, but by the year 2000 is expected to compose only 30%, thereby diminishing science fiction's potential audience (Table 3).

NOTE: Results are based on 10,180 telephone interviews conducted among a nationally representative sample of adults age 18 and older throughout 1987.

TABLE 3:
AGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION



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Imprint Publishers, A New PW Series: Poseidon Press
A New Approach to Book Marketing: The Zip-Code Cluster
30 Years of Tucson's Unorthodox Bookmark Bookstore

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Formerly published by Bilingual Books, Inc. Distributed by Cliffs Notes, Inc. through November 30, 1989; exclusively by Sunset thereafter.

Publishers Weekly is published weekly by Bowker Magazine Group, Cahners Magazine Division, Terrence M. McDermott, President; Jerry D. Neth, Vice President/Publishing Operations; J. J. Walsh, Financial Vice President/Magazine Division; Thomas J. Dellamaria, Vice President/Production & Manufacturing. Bowker Magazine Group is also an affiliate of R. R. Bowker Co., Gordon Graham, Chairman of the Board; Ira Siegel, President. Copyright © 1988 by Reed Publishing, USA; Saul Goldweitz, Chairman; Ronald G. Segel, President & Chief Executive Officer; Robert L. Krakoff, Executive Vice President; William M. Platt, Sr. Vice-President. Printed in the U.S.A. SUBSCRIPTION: U.S.A.: 1 year $97, 2 years $165, 3 years $233. Canada: 1 year $177, 2 years $301, 3 years $425. Air delivery to all other countries: 1 year $260, 2 years $442, 3 years $624. (Remit in U.S. funds only.) Single copy $5.00, announcements $10.00 each. Prepayment required. Send single copy requests to: Publishers Weekly, P. O. Box 1979, Marion, OH 43302. PUBLICATION ADDRESS: Publishers Weekly, P.O. Box 1979, Marion, OH 43302. *Address editorial and advertising correspondence to* 249 West 17th Street, New York, NY 10011; telephone: 212/645-0067; telex: 12-7703. *Address circulation correspondence and changes of address to* Publishers Weekly, P.O. Box 1979, Marion, OH 43302; telephone 1-800-669-1002; in Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, and all other countries, telephone: 614-382-3322. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Publishers Weekly*, P.O. Box 1979, Marion, OH 43302. Cahners Publishing Company, a Division of Reed Publishing USA ☐ Specialized Business Magazines for Building & Construction, Manufacturing, Foodservice & Lodging, Electronics & Computers, Interior Design, Printing, Publishing, Industrial Research & Technology, Health Care, and Entertainment. ☐ Specialized Consumer Magazines: *American Baby* and *Modern Bride*.

Publishers Weekly

VOLUME 234 NUMBER 20
ISSN 0000-0019

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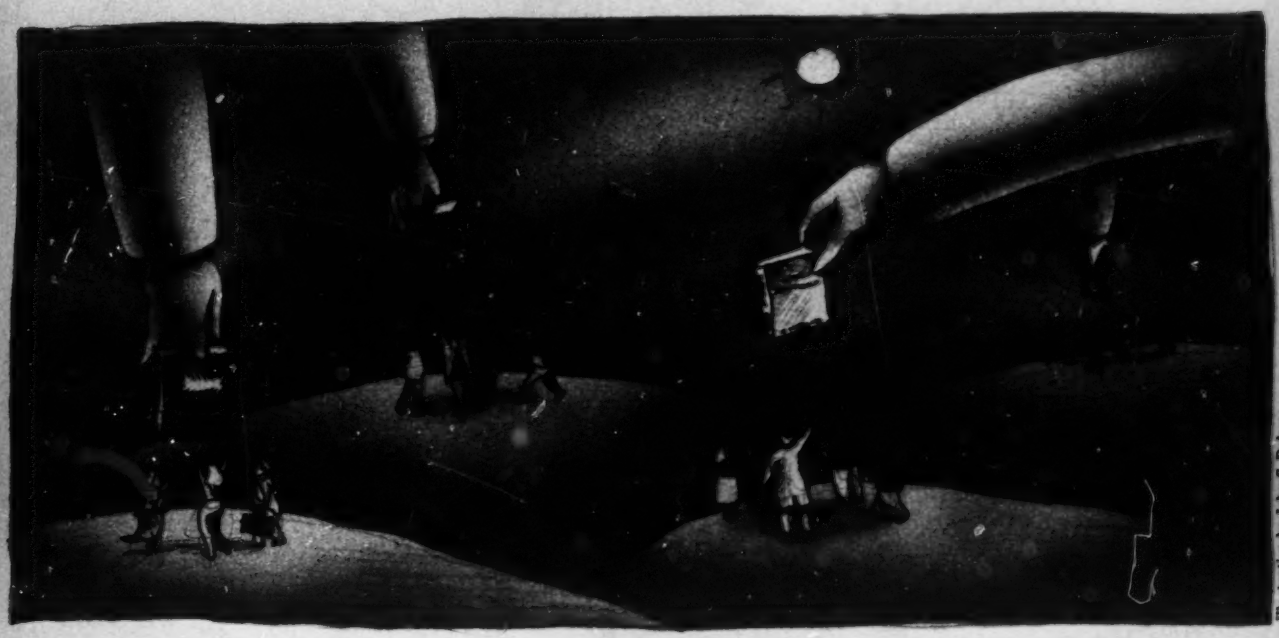


Illustration by John S. Dykes

The Clustering of America:
Target Marketing to Book Buyers

Weiss's new book, The Clustering of America, *just published by Harper & Row, looks at the U.S. as 40 neighborhoods or clusters, each with different demographics and lifestyles. In this article, he looks at how to sell certain categories of books into many of these clusters.*

BY MICHAEL J. WEISS

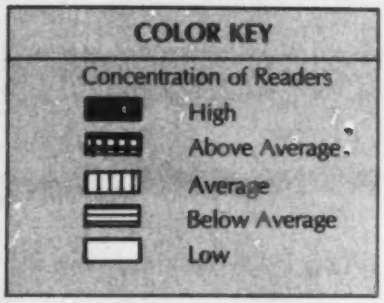
When the Allen-Edmonds Shoe Corporation wanted to boost sales for its handcrafted oxfords, it began by giving its old marketing strategy the boot. The Wisconsin-based company instead turned to an innovative consumer segmentation system called PRIZM, which predicts product potential for every neighborhood in the country. Merging census data and consumer surveys, PRIZM classifies each of over 500,000 consumers into one of 40 lifestyle types, or "clusters." Through an analysis of past mail orders, Allen-Edmonds discovered that most of its customers live in only a handful of the 40 clusters—typically upscale communities that PRIZM calls Blue Blood Estates, Furs & Station Wagons and God's Country.

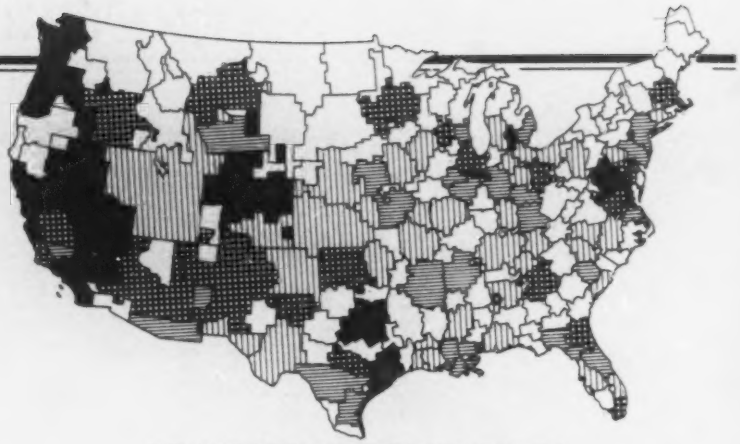
Allen-Edmonds then launched its newly focused marketing campaign, ranking the nation's top 200 advertising markets by cluster makeup and sales potential. Company media-buyers turned to magazines like *Scientific American* and *Smithsonian*, publications that had rarely run shoe ads before but nonetheless were among the favorite magazines in the targeted clusters. Sales reps began contacting retailers in previously ignored cities, places like Helena, Mont., and Palm Springs, Calif., where, as one executive joked, "We didn't think men wore shoes." When annual sales, which had been ambling along at $12 million in 1983, surged to $36 million last year, Allen-Edmonds's accountants joined the company's PRIZM converts.

At a time when American consumers are bombarded by an estimated 15,000 commercial messages every day, an increasing number of companies are relying on cluster systems like PRIZM to target-market everything from shoes to station wagons. Already, magazines such as *Time*, *McCall's* and *Newsweek* have launched special editions filled with ads for expensive items, and targeted their subscribers with Blue Blood Estates ZIP codes. Colgate-Palmolive employed the clusters when it test-marketed a new detergent among the child-filled communities of the Young Suburbia cluster. When Avis opens a used-car lot, it relies on cluster maps to choose the site location and determine whether area consumers would rather drive Honda Civics or Chrysler LeBarons.

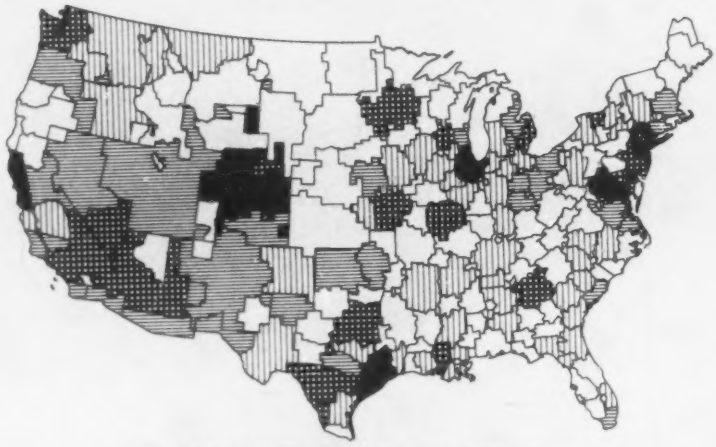
Birds of a Feather . . .

But the cluster system may work best for specialized commodities, such as books. Titles and topics naturally appeal to specific marketing niches among America's reading public. And book selection is a handy barometer of a community's lifestyle. "Where you live speaks volumes about the kind of books you buy," says Doug Anderson, vice-president of Claritas, the marketing firm from Alexandria, Va., that de-





YOUNG URBAN SELF-HELP BUYERS



SUBURBAN ELITE BUSINESS BUFFS

veloped PRIZM. "And cluster marketing can help you reach the readers in one community who love diet books versus the ones who can't get enough detective thrillers."

Geodemography, as this kind of market research is known, has been around since the 1970s, when consumer researchers became frustrated by the apparent ungluing of the mass market. Driven by such trends as the skyrocketing divorce rate and the rise in double-income households, the fragmented marketplace defied standard demographic surveys. All females aged 18–35 and earning over $15,000 annually simply no longer behaved predictably. Those who grew up eating fluffy white bread might one day begin scouring the supermarket for croissants or English muffins.

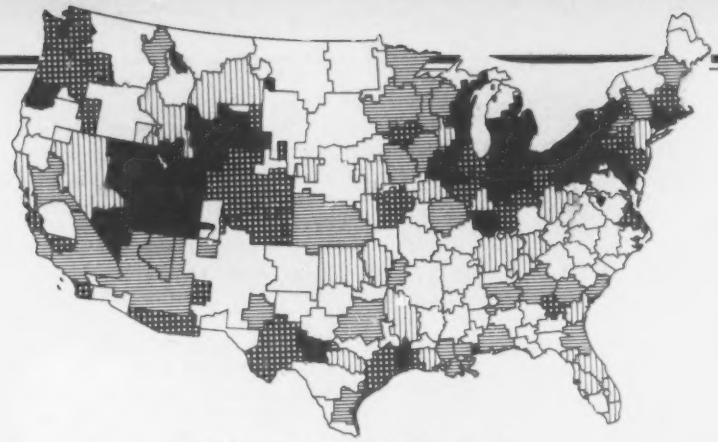
In 1974, a computer-scientist-turned-entrepreneur named Jonathan Robbin devised a revolutionary target-marketing system while seeking business applications for the U.S. Census. He programmed computers to analyze each ZIP code according to hundreds of census characteristics—like affluence, ethnicity and family life-cycle—sorting each into one of the 40 lifestyle clusters. Finally, the company he founded, Claritas, collated the clusters with dozens of media, product and opinion surveys to create PRIZM (Potential Rating Index for ZIP Markets). Knowing only a community's cluster classification, the PRIZM system can accurately predict the lifestyle of its residents—from the brands of bread likely to be found in the pantry to the political bent of books in the den.

Like many statistical concepts that prove effective, Robbin's geodemography is based on a handful of simple principles, the key being "Birds of a feather flock together." Although no neighborhood is strictly homogeneous in all respects, the system works because the differences between the neighborhoods are more significant than the differences between households within

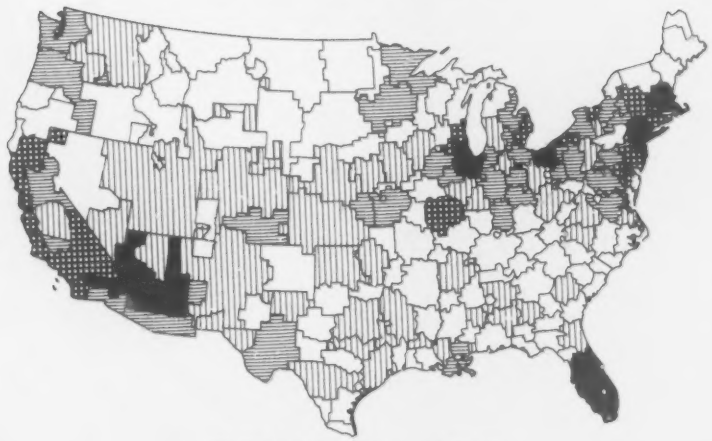
I. WHERE AMERICA'S BOOK BUYERS LIVE

	TYPE OF BOOK			
Name of Market Area	Self-Help	Business	Gardening & Home Repair	Mystery
San Francisco, CA	313	218	67	135
Washington, DC	236	268	49	81
Los Angeles, CA	227	170	91	135
Denver, CO	209	180	124	58
Houston, TX	176	199	119	43
Dallas, TX	154	166	95	60
Atlanta, GA	152	136	88	35
Miami, FL	129	100	68	320
Boston, MA	106	112	111	146
New York, NY	105	174	62	190
Detroit, MI	87	135	178	145
Hartford-New Haven, CT	70	105	208	145
Pittsburgh, PA	42	56	199	112
Buffalo, NY	9	50	202	106
Zanesville, OH	0	0	269	0
Palm Springs, CA	0	0	58	513
Sarasota, FL	0	0	0	671

(Index of 100 equals national average; index of 150 equals 50 percent above the national average; index of 60 equals 40 percent below the national average. Source: Mediamark Research, 1987; Claritas Corp., 1988.)



GARDENING & HOME REPAIR



MATURE MYSTERY MAVENS

the neighborhoods. "People are all different," says Robbin, "but clustering predicts where you can find more of one kind."

Where the Book Buyers Are

And one kind you can find are book buyers. According to a 1987 nationwide survey, 3.5% of American adults (6.3 million people) buy nonfiction hardcovers annually. The heaviest concentration of buyers occurs in communities of suburban, affluent and childless residents—clusters called Blue Blood Estates (places like Beverly Hills, Calif., and Scarsdale, N.Y.), Money & Brains (Princeton, N.J., and Palo Alto, Calif.) and Young Influentials (Atlanta's North Side and Redondo Beach, Calif.). While residents in these communities are buying books at twice the national average, surveys show that residents in rural downscale America—the clusters known as Norma Rae-Ville, Back-Country Folks and Tobacco Roads—buy books at less than one-tenth the U.S. average. In fact, these residents are among the nation's most dedicated TV viewers.

Although PRIZM identifies 19 clusters where residents buy books at above-average rates, targeting 19 market segments can be unwieldy. Typically, companies find it easier to collapse the clusters into a handful of demographically similar neighborhood types in order to focus their marketing effort. In this way, four distinct target groups of book buyers emerge, each with its own demographic and lifestyle characteristics, each with its own media preferences and perspective on the world.

The first group might be dubbed Young Urban Self-Help Buyers, because of its preponderance of young, upscale singles living in city neighborhoods. Compared to the national average, the residents of this target group tend to like jazz, imported beer, convertibles and health clubs. Among their favorite magazines are *New York*, *Gourmet* and *Rolling Stone*. These consumers buy self-help books at rates 78% above the national average on topics ranging from dieting and nutrition to stress reduction and improving your tennis game.

A second target group might be called Suburban Elite Business Buffs, mainly upscale suburbanites ensconced in America's most affluent neighborhoods. In terms of lifestyle, they play tennis, travel abroad and contribute to public television at rates far above the national average. With four times the average number of residents earning over $100,000 a year, they're big consumers of financial products: stocks, bonds, technology and business-oriented books—which they buy 37% more often than does the general population. In their dens, you're likely to see the biographies of Lee Iacocca and Donald Trump alongside copies of *Forbes* and *Barron's*.

In sharp contrast to these groups, a third target segment lives in predominantly middle-class, blue-collar areas. These readers might be called Gardening & Home Repair Fans because of their high purchase rates of home-oriented nonfiction—books on auto repair, woodworking, gardening and home improvement. Residents typically have high-school diplomas, large families and manufacturing jobs. When away from their jobs, they enjoy camping, bowling and hunting.

The final target group might be called Mature Mystery Mavens because of this cluster's tendency to purchase both nonfiction of various genres and mysteries at rates 36% above the national average. Concentrated in the clusters of empty-nesting neighborhoods and comfortable retirement communites, many members of this group are over 65, have upper-middle-class incomes and lead active lifestyles. They like to travel by cruise ship, visit gambling casinos and go to the theater. They'd rather read *Barron's* and *Prevention* than *Sports Afield* and *National Enquirer*.

Hitting the Target

With the target groups identified, Claritas coded maps indicating exactly where the book buyers live. In this way, a publisher can rank those markets with the best potential and target its promotion budget accordingly. And because city markets have been assigned clusters down to the block level, a publisher can gauge an individual store's potential for moving a particular kind of book—as well as determine whether a certain bookstore is selling below par for mysteries or business books.

For instance, more than twice as many Urban Self-Help Book Buyers

II. PREFERRED MEDIA BY THE FOUR TARGET GROUPS

Young Urban Self-Help Buyers

Clusters (sample communities): Bohemian Mix (Greenwich Village, Haight-Ashbury), Urban Gold Coast (Manhattan's Upper East Side, Chicago's Fort Dearborn), Young Influentials (Redondo Beach, Cal., Atlanta's North Side), New Beginnings (Northeast Phoenix, Houston's Park Place)

Magazines	Index	Newspapers/Radio	Index
New York	250	L.A. Times Magazine	375
Scientific American	236	N.Y. Times Magazine	212
Gourmet	186	Progressive Radio	135
Rolling Stone	184	Pro Basketball on Radio	12[illegible]
GQ	182	Newspaper Entertainment Section	125

Suburban Elite Business Buffs

Clusters: Money & Brains (Princeton, N.J., Palo Alto, Cal.), Blue Blood Estates (Beverly Hills, Scarsdale, N.Y.), Furs & Station Wagons (Plano, Tex., Reston, Va.), Young Suburbia (Ypsilanti, Mich., Pleasanton, Cal.), Two More Rungs (Flushing, N.Y., Skokie, Ill.)

Magazines	Index	Newspapers/Radio	Index
Barron's	265	N.Y. Times Magazine	324
Fortune	254	The Wall Street Journal	250
Forbes	248	Newspaper Business Section	170
Travel & Leisure	241	News/Talk Radio	160
Town & Country	212	Pro Football on Radio	161

Gardening & Home Repair Fans

Clusters: Middle America (Oshkosh, Wis., Sandusky, Oh.), Rank & File (Wyandotte, Mich., Sparrows Point, Md.), Shotguns & Pickups (Zanesville, Oh., Molalla, Ore.), Blue-Chip Blues (Ronkonkoma, N.Y., South Whittier, Cal.)

Magazines	Index	Newspapers/Radio	Index
The Family Handyman	144	USA Today	142
Sports Afield	138	Baseball on Radio	136
Mother Earth News	138	Auto Racing on Radio	127
Country Living	138	Progressive Radio	121
Popular Mechanics	137	Newspaper Classified Section	112

Mature Mystery Mavens

Clusters: Gray Power (Sun City, Ariz., Sarasota, Fla.), Levittown, U.S.A. (Norwood, Mass., Cuyahoga Falls, Oh.), New Melting Pot (Jackson Heights, N.Y., Los Feliz, Cal.), Black Enterprise (Capital Heights, Md., Auburn Park, Ill.), Pools & Patios (Fairfield, Conn., Los Feliz, Cal.)

Magazines	Index	Newspapers/Radio	Index
Money	154	Beautiful Music Radio	156
Gourmet	139	News/Talk Radio	152
Golf	127	Newspaper Business Section	138
Prevention	122	Home News Section	129

(Index of 100 equals national average; index of 150 equals 50 percent above the national average; index of 60 equals 40 percent below the national average. Source: Mediamark Research, 1987; Claritas Corp., 1988.)

live in San Francisco and Washington, D.C., than in average cities. So publishers of self-help books should concentrate their limited promotion campaigns on those cities and make sure their authors swing through those markets on publicity tours. Bookstores in the heart of Urban Self-Help country should consider direct-mail flyers targeted to a few selected ZIP codes. (The nation's largest direct-mail advertiser, Advo Systems, charges $25–$35 per thousand ads.) Buying space in alternative weeklies like Washington's *City Paper* should also reach this target group.

Any promotion effort aimed at the Suburban Elite Business Buffs should target the suburbs surrounding cities like Houston and Los Angeles. Newspapers such as the *Los Angeles Times* and *Houston Chronicle* publish zoned editions that can be adapted to cluster marketing. By inserting ads in the Buffs' favorite newspaper section—the business pages—a publisher can virtually hand-deliver a book announcement to the neighborhoods of the most receptive readers (about $40 per thousand). In addition, while buying time on commercial TV may be prohibitive, a 30-second spot on cable TV's Financial News Network can cost as little as $50 in a countywide system. Finally, taking into account that these readers are also big public TV supporters, a tie-in with the local PBS station may turn a business biography into a premium during a fund-raising campaign.

A different tack is demanded when selling books to the Gardening & Home Repair Fans, given this cluster's concentration in the blue-collar neighborhoods of Rust Belt cities like Pittsburgh and Buffalo. These consumers are not big newspaper readers; nor do they watch cable or public TV at high rates. In fact, surveys show they'd rather buy books in drugstores than bookstores. Accordingly, publishers should consider in-store displays and shopper tabloids—promoting a gardening book, say, alongside the lawn sprinklers. As PRIZM profiles show, magazines like *Country Living* and *Popular Mechanics* should be part of the ad-buying mix.

With the Mature Mystery Mavens concentrated in Sunbelt retirement communities such as Miami, Sarasota and Palm Springs, an obvious marketing approach would be to purchase ad space in the many special-interest newspapers and maga-

III. DEMOGRAPHIC AND LIFESTYLE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FOUR TARGET GROUPS

Young Urban Self-Help Buyers

Demographic Characteristics	Lifestyle Activities
Multi-Unit Dwellings	Buy Jazz Records/Tapes
Urban & Urban Fringe Areas	Drive Convertibles
College Educations	Travel by Cruise Ship
Single & Divorced Persons	Enjoy Sailing
Moved in Last Year	Drink Imported Beer
White-Collar Occupations	Enjoy Skiing
Adults Aged 25–34	Belong to a Health Club

Suburban Elite Business Buffs

Demographic Characteristics	Lifestyle Activities
Home Values over $200,000	Drive Leased Cars
Incomes Over $100,000	Enjoy Tennis
College Educations	Travel by Domestic Air Carrier
Suburban Fringe Areas	Drink Imported Dinner Wine
Upper-Level White-Collar Jobs	Own a Personal Computer
Jobs in Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	Contribute to Public TV
Households with 3+ Vehicles	Own a Compact Disc Player

Gardening & Home Repair Fans

Demographic Characteristics	Lifestyle Activities
Suburban Fringe Areas	Enjoy Bowling
Incomes of $35,000–$50,000	Belong to a Veterans Club
Households with 3+ Vehicles	Travel by Car with Camping Equipment
Married Couples with Children	Drive Sport/Utility Vehicle
Jobs in Durable Manufacturing	Enjoy Hunting
Home Values of $80,000–$100,000	Buy '40s to '60s Pop Records
High School Educations	Visited a Theme Park

Mature Mystery Mavens

Demographic Characteristics	Lifestyle Activities
Urban & Urban Fringe Areas	Watch Ice Hockey
Adults Aged 65+ Years	Travel by Cruise Ship
Home Values of $100,000–$150,000	Drink Scotch Whiskey
Moved in last 21–30 Years	Take Foreign Trips
Incomes of $50,000–$75,000	Enjoy Salt Water Fishing
Jobs in Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	Visit Gambling Casinos
Multi-Unit Dwellings	Buy Classical Records/Tapes

(Profile based on a 1987 survey of 40,000 Americans conducted by Mediamark Research and analyzed by the Claritas Corporation, 1988.)

zines already targeted to retirees. But a direct-mail campaign could also be developed by purchasing the subscription list of a magazine like *Prevention*—in whole or in part—to send book pitches to Mystery Maven communities. Suppliers of lists, such as Metromail and R. L. Polk, sell address labels for virtually all of America's 80 million households for as little as $30 per thousand. It doesn't take a detective to realize the possibilities in promoting mystery titles to retirement communities.

Of course, achieving the best results requires creative copywriters and designers who are attuned to the demographic and lifestyle profiles of the different book-buying segments. For example, any campaign to the Suburban Elite Business Buffs ought to place books and their buyers in the comfort of their good-life surroundings. And a radio spot for Young Urban Self-Help Buyers probably should float some jazz music in the background, a way to get this group's attention.

Admittedly, much of this advice may sound like common sense; it doesn't take a Rhodes scholar to figure out that people with money enjoy books about how to make more. But by identifying the right group of people in the ZIP markets, one can validate such gut impressions. And in this era of consumer niches and limited promotion budgets, the cluster system may be just the tool to help a publisher get a bigger bang for its promotion buck. □

In Search of Backlist Supersellers

When a record sells 500,000 copies it goes gold, at a million it goes platinum—all with much media fanfare. But what about books? While bestseller lists take account of some of the book industry's supersellers, there are many that go unnoted. In future Marketing columns, *PW* will take an occasional closer look at some of these unheralded titles.

These could include books published long ago whose sales have climbed slowly over the years, reprints, even books that sell in markets bestseller lists don't reflect.

PW is interested in hearing about books that silently attained supersellerdom in 1988, with sales going over the 500,000 mark. Publishers are invited to submit information to Judith Appelbaum, 6 E. 39th St., Room 1201, New York, N.Y. 10016.